

# Write It and They Will Come

Written by Judith Tramayne-Barth  
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Write it, offer it for free on your site and they will come. Yeah right and then you woke up.

Or stay in your happy little daze, constantly check your counter 80 times a day and be the only unique visitor your site gets. Either way you are deluding yourself if you don't think marketing is the key to your success on the Internet.

So easy to say -- market your site -- but so hard to do. Especially since the Internet is so vast, where do you start?

You start by taking it one step at a time -- otherwise because of the size of the Internet, you'll go insane, get depressed because you feel like you're tap dancing in place or quit. None of these are viable choices so let's see if I can help you on your journey to success.

But first, understand this -- it takes sheer hard work, persistence and loads of time to be successful on the Internet. Marketing is an every day job because the Internet is dynamic and constantly changing. What worked yesterday, won't today.

If you have a minimal budget (read that non-existent) at your disposal, it means you must be creative in your marketing endeavors. But before you become creative, you'd better get organized or you'll still be dancing in place. This means, you build a marketing template to place links on when you go to sites.

This is simply an HTML page with headings so when you visit a site you'll need to return to next week or month, you just copy and paste the URL and put it on your template. It should be a hyperlink (i.e. <"http://www.sitename.com" target="\_blank">) which opens a new window. Also you'll want this template minimized on your task bar when marketing so every time you find a useful site, you can quickly open it and input your new link. The first place you're going to visit is your:

==> Browser's Favorites Folder

If you're like most people, it is chock full of sites you thought might be useful later but now is so disorganized you don't even like opening it anymore. Or it's so organized with folders, all the sites are out of sight which means out of mind. This is neither efficient nor effective when marketing. You need to place these sites on your new HTML template page.

Yes, I can hear your gnashing of teeth and groaning but the time spent organizing this wealth of information will be worth it. Think how you'd feel if your computer crashes and you lost all the URLs. By placing them on your template, you can easily back up this information onto a floppy disk or rewriteable CD.

Before you merrily go placing the link from your Favorites Folders onto your template, you need to click on it and make sure the site is still up and running. Also, you'll want to make sure it goes to the exact page you need. This is so you do not waste your time going to the index page and clicking links next month when you use it again (i.e., the link for search engines should go directly to their Add URL page).

Now the second step is to go to:

==> Search Engines

This is where creative thinking comes into play. You are going to have to figure out who your target audience is so you might want to read my article "Targeting Using A Mind Map" to find out. The object in marketing is not to get the most hits but the most TARGETED hits. You can have a million visitors to your site but if they aren't buying your products or services, what's the point of marketing? Bragging rights doesn't put food on your table or a roof over your head.

No, what you're looking for is places your target market hangs out. So you are going to look for portals or sites that cater to these people. Now this can take time as search engines are notorious for spewing forth less than stellar results. So go to their instruction pages and find out how to do advanced searches. Once you know what you're looking for your searches become easier and produce better results.

Normally, these portal sites have message boards and owners who are receptive to products which will benefit their visitors. You'd be surprised at how many owners love it when you offer them something free they can give to their members.

And usually, this doesn't take anything more than offering them a content rich article or free ebook where you put an upsell message at the end (see my articles "How to Make A Free eBook" and "Upsell For Free" at my site).

Also click on people's sites who leave messages on the boards because their sites usually have links to other like minded (theme) sites you will find useful. Pretty soon, much to your surprise, you'll find yourself just surfing these link pages to find your targeted audience and you won't be using the search engines all that much.

While you're at the search engines remember to copy and paste the link for the Add URL page to put on your template and also you might as well add your site information again. Although this is getting harder to do now that most of them have gone to making you pay.

The third step is:

==> Group Lists

In particular, <http://www.yahogroups.com/> and <http://www.topica.com/>. Both are a gold mine for marketing purposes. Their search boxes will lead you to lists which pertain to your targeted audience. For instance on my Trabar.com site, I sell a yarn holder my husband makes. It's pretty unique and the only people interested would be a niche audience of knitters and crocheters so I put these two "keywords" into their search box and on yahogroups alone, I came up with 207 knitting lists and 112 crocheting lists.

My intent is not to spam any of these lists but I will join the ones I find interesting and post useful information along with my signature line (if their lists do not have rules against this).

Also, I look at their group list main page because a lot of the list owners have their site addresses on these pages. I know if I go to their sites, I will also find a wonderful amount of link pages leading me to other sites. Some will have message boards which let you leave links to useful products but most times you will just join their community and reply to posts with useful information. You, of course, include your URL.

This does two things:

- Allows you to help people
- And if message board accepts HTML, allows you to leave a link which search engines pick up on thus increasing your popularity rating.

Remember when you're doing this to include each site's URL as a hyperlink on your HTML template because you'll want to go back and post on a regular basis.

As I said earlier, marketing on the Internet takes hard work, persistence and loads of time but these three suggestions should help. Learning how to market smarter not harder is the key to being successful on the Internet.

Judith Tramayne-Barth

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